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THE COUNCIL  
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July 7, 2004

Chairman Michael K. Powell  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20554

RE: Docket No. 03-133

Dear Chairman Powell:

The borough of Queens boasts one of America's most diverse urban populations, with 46% of its residents born abroad and nearly 54% speaking a language other than English in the home. The importance of affordable phone service for the people in my community cannot be overstated, as people want to keep in touch with relatives across the country and around the world.

To ensure access to phone services in Queens, many residents have chosen to use pre-paid calling cards. National data show that this method of calling has grown in popularity, particularly among strong ethnic communities and lower-income households. In fact, over 40% of Latinos are card users, and roughly three-quarters of pre-paid card purchasers earning less than \$20,000 a year report purchasing them on a regular basis.

Given the reliance among my constituents on pre-paid calling cards, I am watching with great interest the pending petition regarding the applicability of intrastate access fees to calls made via pre-paid cards. If the Commission decides to move away from the current model, and determines that access charges and other fees may be applied to many pre-paid phone calls, the price of these cards will surely rise.

In Queens and other diverse locales in America, consumers can ill afford to see their \$10 phone card buy fewer minutes, the sure result of what is will become a disproportionate tax on minorities and low-income consumers if the cost of pre-paid

calling cards goes up. I urge the Commission to rule in favor of keeping pre-paid calls affordable.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hiram Monserrate". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small cross-like mark above the "t" in Monserrate.

Councilman Hiram Monserrate  
New York City Council

CC: Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy  
Commissioner Michael Copps  
Commissioner Kevin Martin  
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein  
Senator Schumer  
Senator Clinton  
Assemblymember Peralata